

Box Elder

**A.K.A. ASHLEAF MAPLE, MANITOBA MAPLE,
CALIFORNIA BOX ELDER**

Acer negundo

Sugar content 1.5–2%

Mature height 40–60 feet (12–18 m)



The only species of maple with a compound leaf, the box elder is the most widespread and tolerant of environmental conditions. It also has the softest wood and, with weedy-looking shoots sprouting from multiple trunks, has the least aesthetic appearance in the family. Of little, if any, commercial use, its sap is nonetheless sweet enough for processing by the backyard syrup maker.

LEAVES

- * 3–5 leaflets, coarsely serrated margin
- * 2–4 inches (5–10 cm)
- * Light green above, paler below
- * Similar to poison ivy
- * Fall: pale yellow



BARK

- * Young: light brown to gray, warty
- * Older: shallow interconnected ridges



TWIGS

- * Pastel red, green to purplish green
- * Often coated with soft white powder that rubs off, glossy underneath



BUDS

- * White, hairy
- * Large-scaled, blunt

FLOWERS

- * Yellowish green in hanging clusters along a single axis
- * Male and female flowers on separate trees
- * Appear in spring



FRUIT

- * V-shaped, green, paired samaras in drooping clusters
- * Wings 1-1½ inch (2.5-3.8 cm)
- * Mature light tan in fall

